

LISTING OF CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method of making a granola or snack-food product, comprising:

a. at a temperature of about 90 degrees C or higher, mixing dry mix ingredients for the granola or snack-food product with a fat-free liquid binder to obtain a formable mixture, wherein said liquid binder is a sugar solution consisting essentially of less than about 6% by weight water and at least about 94% by weight sugar, and wherein said binder is a liquid at about 90 degrees C and sets when cooled to room temperature;

b. at about 90 degrees C or higher~~[[,]]~~and while the binder is still liquid, cutting the mixture into a plurality of product precursors; and

c. cooling the precursors to set the binder, thereby obtaining the granola or snack-food product~~[[s]]~~.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the binder sets when cooled below about 70° C.

20. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the binder sets when cooled below about 40° C.

21. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the binder is a sugar solution having a sugar concentration of about 98% by weight.

22. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the binder is a sugar solution having a sugar

concentration of up to about 99%.

23. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the binder comprises at least one sugar selected from the group consisting of maltose, saccharose, galactose, fructose, and glucose.

24. (New) The method of claim 17, comprising obtaining the binder by:
dissolving a mixture of at least one sugar selected from the group consisting of maltose, saccharose, galactose, fructose, and glucose in water to form an aqueous sugar solution; and
heating the aqueous sugar solution to evaporate water from the solution and concentrate the sugar or sugars therein;
wherein a binder is obtained which is a liquid at an elevated temperature and which sets when cooled to room temperature.

25. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the ingredients for the product comprise at least one ingredient selected from the group consisting of nuts, fruit, dried fruit, cereals, and cereal products.

26. (New) The method of claim 17, comprising mixing the ingredients at a temperature of about 100° C or higher.

27. (New) The method of claim 17, comprising forming the product precursors at about 100° C or higher.